"COMICRAFT" 1992 2002

PULP SCIENCE FICTION

ACTIVE IMAGES

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STARKINGS
JOE CASEY
LAZRONN

SELECTION

THE ORIGIN OF HIP FLASK®

"THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A MAN FOR BRINGING OUT THE ANIMAL IN AN ANIMAL."

ROGER ROSENBLATT 'EXPERIMENTAL ANIMALS' 1994

HIP FLASK™ UNNATURAL SELECTION, July, 2002. Published by ACTIVE IMAGES; OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 8616 LA TIJERA BLVD #310, LOS ANGELES CA 90045. Copyright © 2002 Active Images. President & first Tiger: Richard Starkings. All rights reserved. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. HIP FLASK, INFORMATION AGENT (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of ACTIVE IMAGES. www.hipflask.com PRINTED IN CANADA.

THIS IS A NEW BEGINNING.

DOCTOR NIKKEN--

SILENCE!

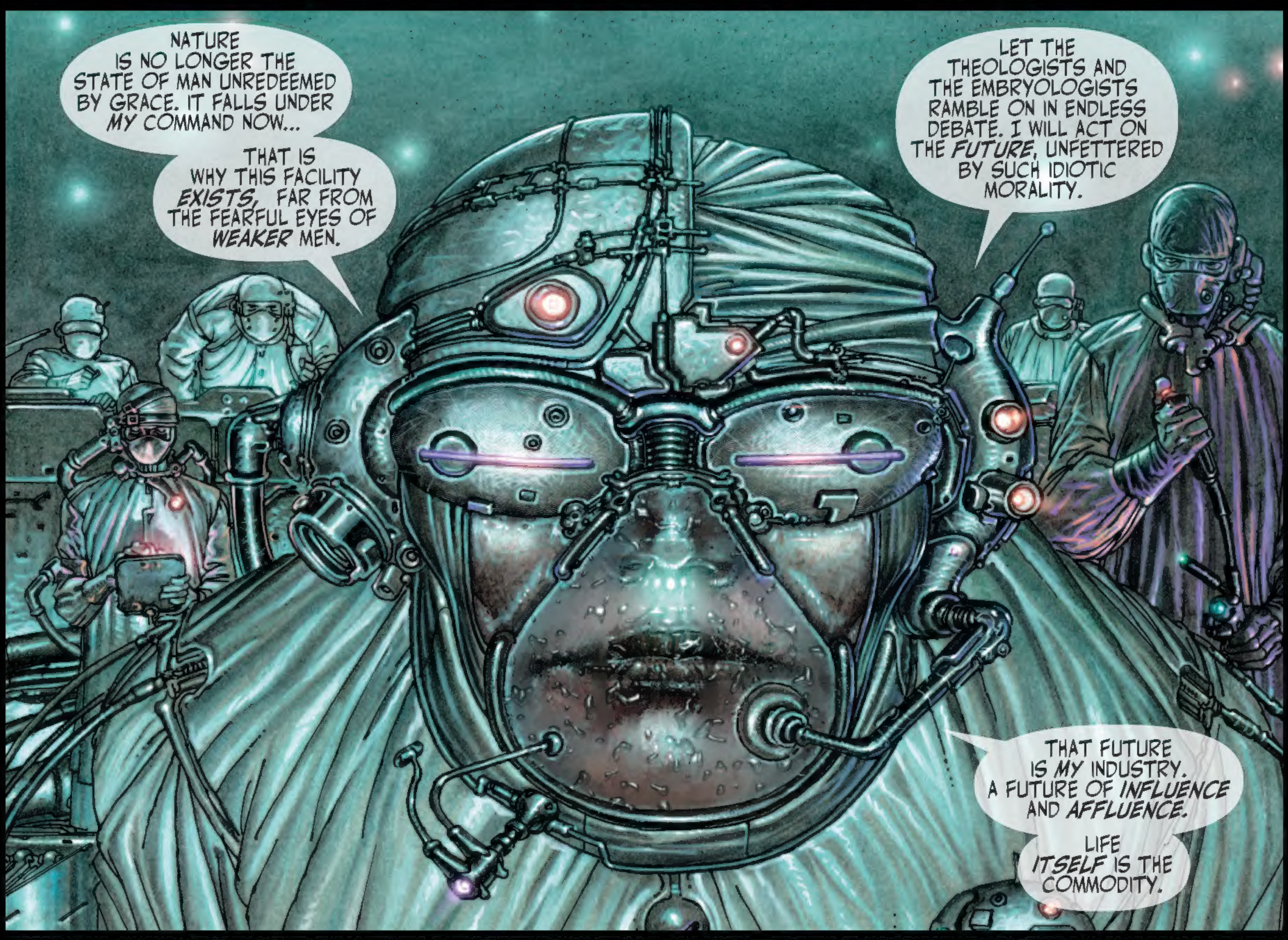
I AM THE VOICE THAT WILL BE HEARD THIS HOUR.

NORTH AFRICA · 2218

ONE MUST WONDER IF THIS IS HOW *GOD* FELT ON THE *SIXTH* DAY...

...OR IN THE INCALCULABLE MOMENT WHEN HE DECIDED TO GIVE THE EARTH A SON, NEEDING NOTHING BUT HIS OWN *OMNIPOTENCE* TO CREATE.

ACTIVE IMAGES PRESENTS:


NATURE IS NO LONGER THE STATE OF MAN UNREDEEMED BY GRACE. IT FALLS UNDER *MY* COMMAND NOW...
THAT IS WHY THIS FACILITY *EXISTS*, FAR FROM THE FEARFUL EYES OF *WEAKER* MEN.
LET THE THEOLOGISTS AND THE EMBRYOLOGISTS RAMBLE ON IN ENDLESS DEBATE. I WILL ACT ON THE *FUTURE*, UNFETTERED BY SUCH IDIOTIC MORALITY.
THAT FUTURE IS *MY* INDUSTRY. A FUTURE OF *INFLUENCE* AND *AFFLUENCE*.
LIFE *ITSELF* IS THE COMMODITY.

THE ORIGIN OF HIP FLASK

NOW, LET US LOOK TO THE FRUIT OF EARLIER LABOR...

WAIT...

INTERNAL SENSORS ARE READING AN *ANOMALY*...

FOCUS CORRELATING LENSES AND CENTER TWO-SIXTY-THREE.

UNNATURAL SELECTION

RICHARD STARKINGS
STORY & LETTERS

LADRONN
ART & STORY

JOE CASEY
WITH STARKINGS
DIALOGUE

SO... THE MECHANICAL AND CHEMICAL AGENTS DO INDEED STIMULATE THE UNFERTILIZED EGG. THE PARTHENOTE ACHIEVES *INDEPENDENCE*, BUT PERHAPS THE DESIGN FEATURES OF THE ARTIFICIAL WOMB ARE PROMOTING AN UNCONTROLLABLE MUTATION IN DEVELOPMENT AT A CRITICAL JUNCTION.

HIP FLASK
CREATED BY RICHARD STARKINGS

SCIENCE IS EVER THE VIOLENT PROCESS OF DISCOVERY. AND THERE IS MONEY TO BE MADE HERE... THERE IS *POWER*. I WILL NOT BE DISSUADED.

COMMENCE EMBRYONIC TERMINATION IMMEDIATELY. PREPARE A NEW OVUM SCREENING AND LET US MOVE ON TO *PHASE TWO*.

WHEN GOD CREATED *ADAM*...

"...HE TOO NEEDED AN EVE..."

NORTH AFRICA · 2224

THIS IS THE VOICE OF NIKKEN...

THEY SAY NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION. THIS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE WHEN CONSIDERING THE SCIENCE INVOLVED HERE.

THE FEMALES INDIGENOUS TO THIS REGION HAVE PROVEN TO BE EXCELLENT ENGINES OF REPRODUCTION...

... THE FACT THAT NO ONE HAS MISSED THEM IS MERELY AN ADDED BONUS.

RETRIEVING SUBJECT SEVEN-A..

NOTIFY DOCTOR NIKKEN THAT THE EXTRACTION TEAM AWAITS HIM IN SURGICAL BAY FOUR...

...YES...

WELCOME TO MY WORLD, FEEBLE CREATURE.

BREATHE DEEP. WITH EACH GASP OF OXYGEN, YOU WILL GROW STRONGER.

THIS IS AN HISTORIC MOMENT, GENTLEMEN. THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA...

... THESE ANIMALS ARE COMPLETELY *UNIQUE.*

PERHAPS THE TERM 'ANIMAL' NO LONGER EVEN APPLIES.

BRAND IT.

MAPPO SHALL NAME THEM.

MAPPO WILL *OWN* THEM.

MAPPO

HIPPOCAMPUS FLASK 74

DISPOSE OF THE CARRIER. THE WOMAN IS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY NOW.

I WILL BE FATHER AND MOTHER TO THESE BEASTS.

I WILL BE THEIR GOD.

BRING ME ANOTHER.

THIS IS THE VOICE OF NIKKEN...

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MYSELF... I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL MAPPO EMPLOYEES ON A SUCCESSFUL BIRTH.

PLEASE CONSULT YOUR SHARE PACKAGES FOR FUTURE INTERNAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

OUR CURRENT PRODUCTION RATE WILL INCREASE OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD. THIS INITIAL BATCH WILL SOON BEGIN VIRTUAL INDOCTRINATION THERAPY THAT WILL RUN UNTIL SOCIALIZATION CELLS ARE ESTABLISHED...

...THE TEACHERS WILL ARRIVE AT THE END OF THE WEEK.

... THINKING FOR HIMSELF IS THE NATURE OF *MAN.* DO NOT MISTAKE HIS SUPERIORITY FOR SOME SORT OF *OPPORTUNITY.* IT IS BEYOND YOUR CAPACITY TO HAVE AN *ORIGINAL* BEHAVIORAL IMPULSE.

AS FAR AS YOU MONKEYS ARE CONCERNED, THERE IS *NOTHING* OUTSIDE OF THESE WALLS. THERE IS NO WORLD BUT *MAPPO.* THERE IS NO INDIVIDUALITY BEYOND *MAPPO.* THERE ARE NO IDEAS... SAVE FOR *MAPPO.*

THERE IS NO...

... IS YOUR HAND *RAISED,* SEVEN? YOU THINK YOU HAVE... A QUESTION..?

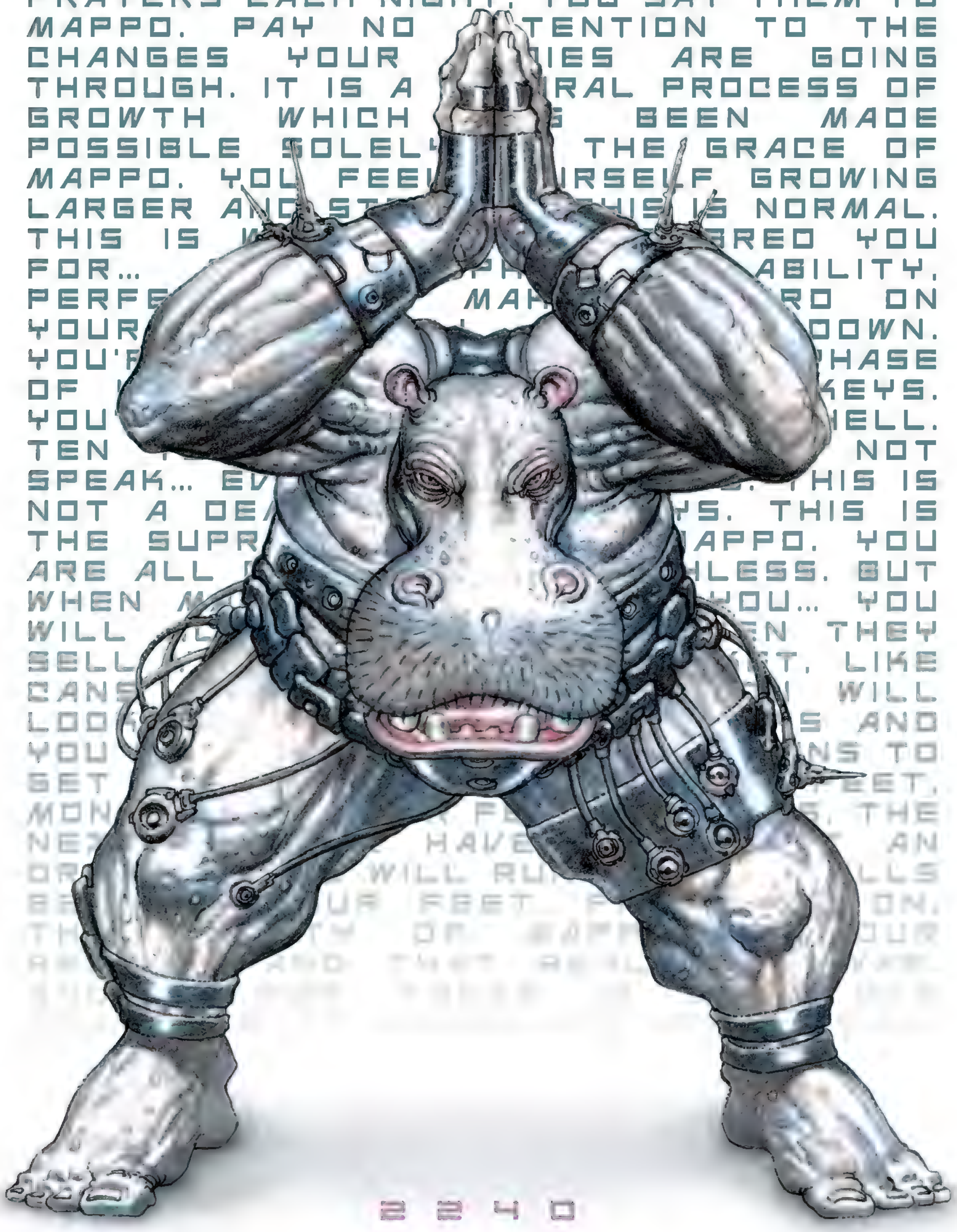
...UH...

THERE IS NO SENSE OF SELF OUTSIDE OF *MAPPO.* NO INDEPENDENT THOUGHT... ONLY THOUGHTS OF *MAPPO.* YOU WILL HEAR NO OTHER VOICE EXCEPT THE VOICE OF *MAPPO.*

YOUR LIVES ARE NOT YOUR OWN, MONKEYS. YOU HAVE BEEN BORN INTO *SERVITUDE...* AND YOUR MASTER IS *MAPPO.*

FREE WILL WAS TAKEN FROM YOU EVEN BEFORE YOU WERE *CONCEIVED,* THE CONCEPT OF FREE WILL IS *BEYOND* YOU. SO IT IS... AND SO IT SHALL ALWAYS BE...

... OBEDIENCE IS YOUR PRIME OBJECTIVE. WHAT IS OBEDIENCE? IT IS GIVING YOURSELF OVER TO MAPPO FOR COMPLETE AND UTTER SERVITUDE, WITHOUT QUESTION OR CONFLICT. REMEMBER, MONKEYS, YOU HAVE NO LIVES SAVE FOR THE ONES GIVEN TO YOU BY MAPPO. WHEN YOU SAY YOUR PRAYERS EACH NIGHT, YOU SAY THEM TO MAPPO. PAY NO [illegible]TENTION TO THE CHANGES YOUR [illegible]IES ARE GOING THROUGH. IT IS A [illegible]RAL PROCESS OF GROWTH WHICH [illegible]S BEEN MADE POSSIBLE SOLEL[illegible] THE GRACE OF MAPPO. YOU FEEL [illegible]RSELF GROWING LARGER AND ST[illegible]HIS IS NORMAL. THIS IS M[illegible]RED YOU FOR... [illegible]ABILITY. PERFE[illegible]MAH[illegible]RO ON YOUR [illegible]DOWN. YOU'[illegible]PHASE OF [illegible]KEYS. YOU[illegible]ELL. TEN [illegible] NOT SPEAK... EV[illegible]S. THIS IS NOT A DEA[illegible]YS. THIS IS THE SUPR[illegible]APPO. YOU ARE ALL [illegible]HLESS. BUT WHEN M[illegible]YOU... YOU WILL [illegible]EN THEY SELL[illegible]T, LIKE CANS[illegible] WILL LOO[illegible]S AND YOU[illegible]NS TO SET[illegible]EET, MON[illegible]S. THE NEX[illegible] HAVE[illegible] AN OR[illegible] WILL RU[illegible]LLS BE[illegible]UR FEET[illegible]ON. TH[illegible]M OF MAPPO. YOUR



"YOU MONKEYS ARE *PATHETIC.* YOU DON'T HAVE THE *LOOK* IN YOUR EYES THAT TELLS ME THAT YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO *KILL.*"

"THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE. PREPARE TO CROSS OVER INTO A WORLD OF *HURT.*"

"*MAPPO* DIDN'T WASTE ITS RESOURCES FOR YOU MONKEYS TO BE *SOFT!* YOU WILL BE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION EVEN IF I HAVE TO BEAT YOU LIKE *DOGS!*"

"JUST BECAUSE YOU MONKEYS *LOOK* SLOW DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO *MOVE* SLOW!"

LET'S GO, MONKEY. YOU'RE GENETICALLY *ENGINEERED* TO LIFT TWICE THAT!

COME ON!!

"MAPPO DOES NOT ACCEPT SECOND-BEST! I HAVEN'T SPENT THE LAST *TEN YEARS* TRAINING YOU SO YOU *WOULDN'T* POSSESS THE *KILLER INSTINCT!* THAT'D BE A WASTE OF MY TIME, WOULDN'T IT?!"

THAT'S IT, MONKEYS! FIGHT AS THOUGH YOUR LIVES *DEPENDED* ON IT! EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO *KILL* EACH OTHER! AFTER ALL...

"...ONE DAY YOU MAY *HAVE* TO."

ALERT!
ALERT! ALERT!
PERIMETER BREACH! ALL UNITS... PREPARE TO REPEL INTRUDERS!

THIS IS NOT A DRILL! THIS IS NOT A DRILL! THIS IS--

THIS IS THE VOICE OF NIKKEN.

REMEMBER... MAN IS YOUR ENEMY! THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE IS KILL OR BE KILLED! MAN INVADES YOUR TERRITORY ONLY TO DESTROY YOU!

YOU ARE NOT GOD'S CHILDREN! GOD MADE YOU WEAKER THAN MAN! MAPPO MADE YOU STRONG! YOU WILL DEFEND MAPPO TO YOUR LAST BREATH!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE! WE NEED MORE MEN NOW!!

MAPPO HAS GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING! WITHOUT MAPPO... YOU HAVE NOTHING! WITHOUT MAPPO...

...YOU ARE NOTHING.

YOU WILL FIGHT
UNTIL YOUR DYING BREATH!
THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE BRED FOR!
THIS IS THE REASON FOR
YOUR EXISTENCE!

STAND TALL
AND FIGHT FOR
YOUR
MASTERS!

YOU ARE LOWER THAN THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD. YOU ARE NOT MAN. YOU ARE NOT ANIMAL.

WHAT IS THAT... ANOTHER ONE?

LOOKS LIKE A HUMAN FEMALE...

THAT BRINGS THE COUNT TO OVER TWO HUNDRED...

YOU ARE MERELY PROPERTY.

"...WHAT IN GOD'S NAME WERE THEY DOING HERE...?!"

MAPPO HAS ENGINEERED YOU! WITHOUT MAPPO... YOU DO NOT EXIST!

REMEMBER... MAN IS YOUR ENEMY! THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE IS KILL OR BE KILLED...

MY GOD... SOMEONE SHUT THAT DOWN!

MAPPO HAS GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING! WITHOUT MAPPO... YOU HAVE NOTHING! WITHOUT MAPPO --

YOU ARE SAFE NOW.

YOU ARE ANIMAL... AND YOU ARE LESS THAN ANIMAL. ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR PLACE IN THIS WORLD... YOU ARE NOTHING MORE THAN PROPERTY OF MAPPO!

OKAY, "DOC," MOVE IT...

YOU ARE NOT GOD'S CHILDREN! GOD MADE YOU WEAKER THAN MAN! MAPPO MADE YOU STRONG! YOU WILL DEFEND MAPPO TO YOUR LAST BREATH!

JEEZUS-- IS SOMEONE GOING TO KILL THAT LOUDSPEAKER?!

YOU CAN TURN IT OFF...

BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS HEAR THE VOICE OF NIKKEN INSIDE THEIR HEADS.

ALL THAT YOU ARE... AND ALL THAT YOU WILL EVER BE... IS BECAUSE OF MAPPO!

YOU ARE NOTHING WITHOUT MAPPO.

T W E N T Y Y E A R S L A T E R

CALIFORNIA

MY LOVE... DID YOU *HEAR* ME..?

FORGIVE ME, SAHARA...

A MOMENTARY *LAPSE...*

DON'T APOLOGIZE, THIS IS THE ONLY TIME AND PLACE I EVER SEE YOU TRULY AT *PEACE*...

I CAN *NEVER* BE AT PEACE, SAHARA.

EVEN THE COMFORT YOU PROVIDE IS SOON CHASED AWAY.

"TIME IS MONEY," MY DEAR.

"TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE..."

OBADIAH, YOU TALK ALWAYS AS IF YOUR SOUL IS CAUGHT BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TODAY...

I LIVE IN THE WORLD OF *MEN*.

MEN WHO TALK OF THEIR HUMANITY, BUT HAVE NOT *SEEN* WHAT YOU AND I HAVE SEEN.

DON'T BE CONCERNED, SAHARA. THEIR TALK MEANS *NOTHING* TO ME. THE VOICE OF *NIKKEN* MEANS NOTHING TO ME..

AS MAN EXPLAINS AWAY THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS OWN MANIPULATIONS, THOSE OF US WITH *REAL* POWER MOVE ON...

LET THE RACISTS AND THE RADICALS CARRY ON IN ENDLESS DEBATE. I WILL CREATE THE NEW FUTURE, UNFETTERED BY WEAK, *HUMAN* MORALITY.

I WILL LEAD. MAN WILL FOLLOW...

BECAUSE NOW, *I* AM THE VOICE.

"HOMO SAPIENS, THE FIRST TRULY
FREE SPECIES, IS ABOUT
TO DECOMMISSION
NATURAL SELECTION,
THE FORCE THAT MADE US..."

"SOON WE MUST LOOK DEEP
WITHIN OURSELVES AND DECIDE
WHAT WE WISH TO BECOME."

EDWARD O. WILSON
CONSILIENCE, THE UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE
1998

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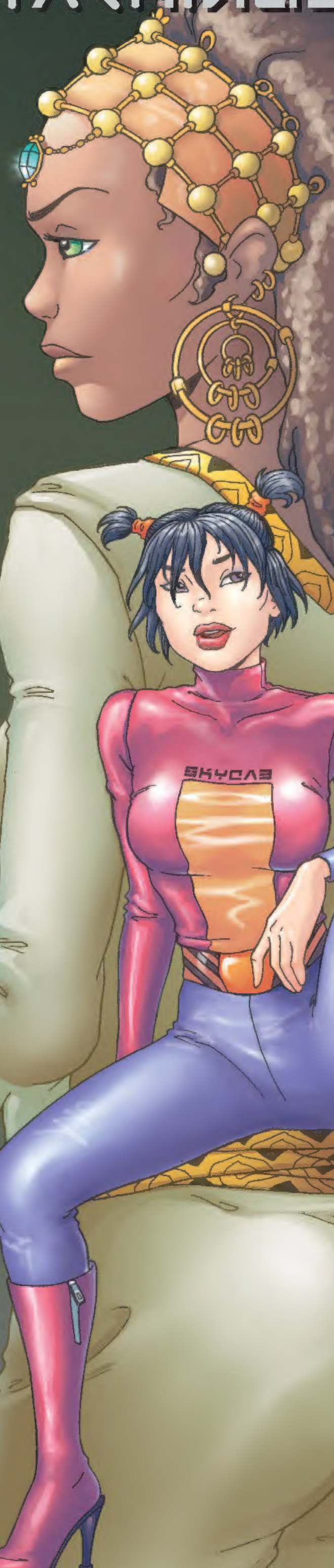

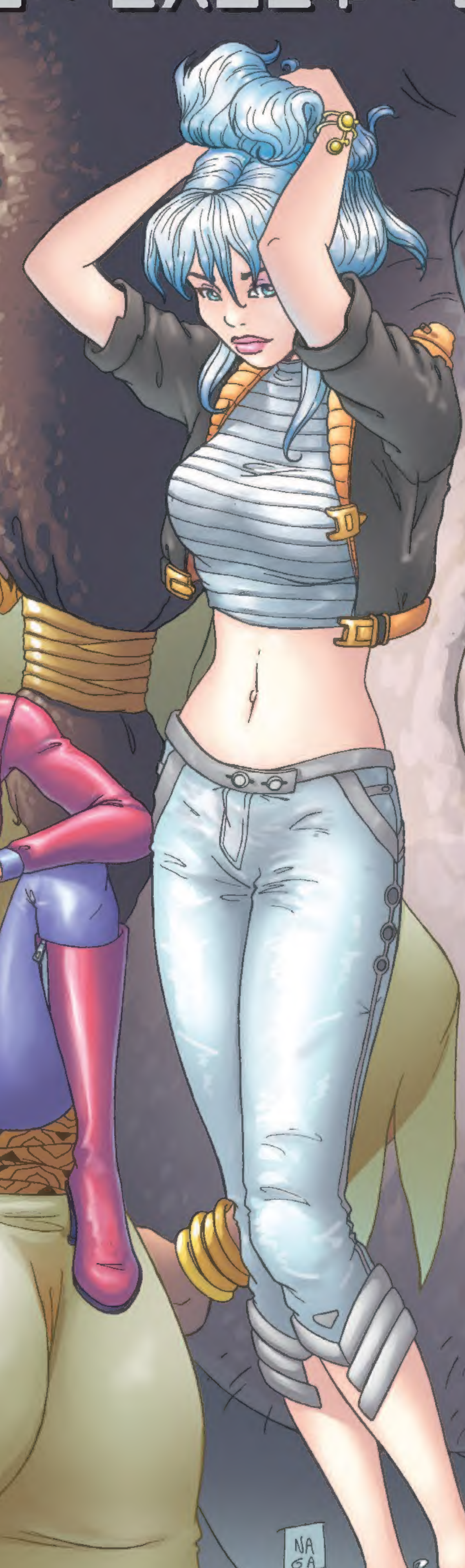

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